

2017 Real Rate Report[®] Snapshot

The Industry's
Leading Analysis
of Law Firm
Rates, Trends,
and Practices

A Note on Comparability of Data

The data used for the 2017 *Real Rate Report* include more than \$9 billion in fees billed for legal services in the United States during the six-year period from 2014 to 2016. The data comprise fees paid by 106 companies to more than 4,620 law firms and more than 112,000 timekeepers. Table 1 provides a summary description of the US dataset.

In addition, we use a smaller subset of data to provide rate analyses for timekeepers outside of the United States. These data from the same three-year period included more than 10,000 lawyers across 80 countries.

The information is not based on surveys, sampling, or reviews of other published information but on anonymized data showing the actual hours and fees law firm personnel billed. Companies participating in this *Real Rate Report* analysis provided written consent for the use of their data. The data used to create this report exclude identifying information of participant companies and of the matters,

timekeepers, and law firms billing on those companies' invoices. (For more information on the data methodology, see the [Appendix](#).)

This dataset is large enough to provide valuable guidance and represents a statistically useful portion of the \$339.3 billion annual US legal services business.¹ Am Law 100 firms alone had 2015 revenues of roughly \$86.7 billion.² This dataset covers approximately 89,000 partners and associates—spread across more than 340 US metropolitan areas.

Again, this sample is large enough to have useful analytical power, but it certainly does not come close to covering all the lawyers in the United States who work for corporate clients. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates there are more than 619,530 lawyers practicing in the United States—58,900 lawyers in the New York City area alone and another 41,520 in the Washington, DC, area.³

¹ Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Gross Output by Industry," 21 April 2017, <https://www.bea.gov/iTable/iTable.cfm?ReqID=51&step=1#reqid=51&step=51&isuri=1&5114=a&5102=15>.

² "Choppy Seas for The Am Law 100," *The American Lawyer*, 1 May 2017, <http://www.americanlawyer.com/id=1202784500051>.

³ Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Employment and Wages," May 2016, <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes231011.htm>.

Table 1: Overview of the US Legal Fees Data Analyzed

Fees Billed	\$9.02 Billion (2014–2016)
US Law Firms	4,620+
Law Firm Associates	48,500+
Law Firm Partners	41,160+
Total Individual Billers	112,100+
Number of Invoice Line Items	25.8 Million
Total Hours Billed	23.9 Million
North American Metropolitan Areas	348
Number of Companies	106
Industries Represented	Basic Materials and Utilities, Consumer Goods, Consumer Services (Including Retail) Financial Services (Including Banking and Insurance), Health Care, Industrials, Technology and Telecommunications

Source: Wolters Kluwer's ELM Solutions, Inc.; CEB analysis.

Section I: High-Level Data Cuts

Cities

2016—Real Rates for Partners and Associates

Trend Analysis (Mean)

City	Role	n	First Quartile	Median	Third Quartile	2016	2015	2014
New York, NY	Partner	3,244	\$560.00	\$817.68	\$1,062.29	\$807.12	\$786.80	\$734.88
	Associate	4,759	\$360.80	\$526.60	\$695.00	\$529.22	\$524.09	\$491.57
Oklahoma City, OK	Partner	49	\$201.83	\$275.42	\$335.00	\$283.30	\$273.80	\$262.25
	Associate	28	\$175.00	\$185.00	\$215.00	\$197.46	\$186.72	\$175.27
Omaha, NE	Partner	47	\$228.00	\$274.47	\$350.00	\$285.49	\$297.39	\$262.22
	Associate	42	\$158.00	\$178.00	\$203.37	\$187.52	\$191.54	\$190.17
Orlando, FL	Partner	108	\$298.10	\$403.44	\$557.23	\$437.35	\$424.52	\$372.14
	Associate	91	\$220.00	\$255.00	\$305.00	\$276.97	\$276.20	\$252.08
Philadelphia, PA	Partner	980	\$400.00	\$560.00	\$715.00	\$563.91	\$536.13	\$508.11
	Associate	1,199	\$261.00	\$325.00	\$420.51	\$342.72	\$332.73	\$311.53
Phoenix, AZ	Partner	203	\$300.00	\$354.14	\$455.00	\$379.23	\$382.86	\$358.57
	Associate	141	\$205.00	\$255.00	\$300.00	\$263.45	\$208.97	\$184.75
Pittsburgh, PA	Partner	253	\$325.00	\$445.11	\$585.00	\$464.34	\$480.82	\$472.95
	Associate	360	\$235.00	\$300.00	\$379.56	\$310.00	\$306.45	\$294.97
Portland, ME	Partner	54	\$205.00	\$311.96	\$418.49	\$330.76	\$310.83	\$288.22
	Associate	28	\$180.00	\$189.48	\$251.01	\$214.42	\$208.55	\$204.04
Portland, OR	Partner	159	\$300.00	\$375.00	\$450.00	\$383.30	\$373.43	\$370.84
	Associate	187	\$233.76	\$270.00	\$315.00	\$272.39	\$260.06	\$252.70
Providence, RI	Partner	31	\$205.70	\$300.00	\$425.00	\$350.46	\$301.01	\$313.92
	Associate	26	\$175.00	\$212.50	\$235.00	\$217.97	\$199.01	\$192.21
Raleigh, NC	Partner	58	\$265.30	\$347.71	\$425.00	\$360.70	\$357.56	\$346.61
	Associate	39	\$180.00	\$225.00	\$280.00	\$236.81	\$247.76	\$230.21
Reno, NV	Partner	13	\$310.82	\$475.00	\$504.00	\$438.91	\$336.86	\$350.32
	Associate	9	\$185.00	\$250.00	\$325.00	\$264.84	\$258.18	\$260.49
Richmond, VA	Partner	173	\$300.00	\$434.70	\$645.00	\$467.47	\$461.70	\$437.71
	Associate	178	\$230.00	\$327.24	\$378.30	\$320.60	\$318.97	\$301.89
Riverside, CA	Partner	22	\$290.33	\$300.00	\$304.93	\$302.06	\$305.33	\$275.86
	Associate	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$267.74	\$236.98
Rochester, NY	Partner	34	\$250.00	\$360.00	\$375.00	\$332.39	\$348.51	\$339.04
	Associate	28	\$197.50	\$250.00	\$277.86	\$240.27	\$227.43	\$237.64
Sacramento, CA	Partner	46	\$330.76	\$393.16	\$585.00	\$455.04	\$453.27	\$390.86
	Associate	42	\$250.00	\$260.00	\$300.84	\$296.00	\$300.49	\$271.86
Salt Lake City, UT	Partner	91	\$270.00	\$335.77	\$431.20	\$351.24	\$332.17	\$316.96
	Associate	38	\$180.00	\$215.00	\$270.00	\$223.52	\$232.96	\$310.35
San Antonio, TX	Partner	18	\$256.50	\$325.00	\$440.00	\$363.76	\$301.79	\$351.42
	Associate	7	\$224.30	\$225.00	\$240.00	\$230.61	\$237.96	\$255.67

Section I: High-Level Data Cuts

Cities

By Matter Type

2016—Real Rates for Partners and Associates

Trend Analysis (Mean)

City	Matter Type	Role	n	First Quartile	Median	Third Quartile	2016	2015	2014
Rochester, NY	Litigation	Partner	19	\$250.00	\$360.00	\$385.00	\$334.11	\$306.52	\$333.14
		Associate	19	\$185.00	\$248.02	\$254.38	\$232.32	\$209.03	\$221.77
	Non-Litigation	Partner	22	\$246.26	\$307.50	\$369.23	\$314.66	\$384.78	\$341.20
		Associate	13	\$200.00	\$275.00	\$300.00	\$278.60	\$254.67	\$251.41
Sacramento, CA	Litigation	Partner	27	\$337.17	\$385.00	\$522.75	\$422.80	\$419.47	\$378.63
		Associate	30	\$240.00	\$259.23	\$305.37	\$287.61	\$276.02	\$254.79
	Non-Litigation	Partner	26	\$329.95	\$396.74	\$628.00	\$474.69	\$474.36	\$428.81
		Associate	21	\$255.00	\$275.40	\$309.27	\$317.70	\$335.23	\$298.96
Salt Lake City, UT	Litigation	Partner	48	\$250.00	\$353.50	\$442.07	\$348.82	\$316.05	\$311.13
		Associate	11	\$170.00	\$235.00	\$280.00	\$223.11	\$196.59	\$201.25
	Non-Litigation	Partner	52	\$275.00	\$327.50	\$382.40	\$343.39	\$344.62	\$320.96
		Associate	26	\$190.00	\$206.02	\$258.05	\$221.40	\$242.52	\$355.12
San Antonio, TX	Litigation	Partner	12	\$245.00	\$312.50	\$370.40	\$335.93	\$280.44	\$322.61
		Associate	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$209.38	\$239.90
San Diego, CA	Litigation	Partner	102	\$250.00	\$374.50	\$652.90	\$456.83	\$452.86	\$445.22
		Associate	84	\$185.00	\$245.54	\$325.00	\$288.40	\$281.41	\$278.34
	Non-Litigation	Partner	95	\$325.00	\$455.00	\$770.19	\$532.30	\$532.27	\$542.74
		Associate	77	\$185.00	\$250.00	\$390.00	\$305.49	\$352.75	\$354.55
San Francisco, CA	Litigation	Partner	307	\$290.00	\$531.63	\$759.00	\$541.22	\$543.74	\$548.12
		Associate	279	\$240.00	\$316.00	\$475.00	\$370.50	\$363.85	\$364.08
	Non-Litigation	Partner	360	\$416.50	\$615.63	\$781.33	\$623.16	\$640.77	\$638.75
		Associate	280	\$285.13	\$385.00	\$505.38	\$412.76	\$431.67	\$427.68
San Jose, CA	Litigation	Partner	52	\$565.00	\$779.25	\$910.00	\$742.48	\$717.96	\$633.71
		Associate	44	\$392.50	\$440.00	\$585.00	\$467.91	\$390.78	\$398.71
	Non-Litigation	Partner	146	\$500.00	\$771.85	\$900.00	\$736.05	\$752.52	\$677.66
		Associate	104	\$308.89	\$394.13	\$583.70	\$455.76	\$442.89	\$427.10
San Juan, PR	Litigation	Partner	35	\$181.79	\$210.00	\$248.89	\$213.14	\$208.85	\$212.36
		Associate	45	\$126.40	\$145.00	\$160.00	\$146.92	\$142.92	\$143.57
	Non-Litigation	Partner	56	\$189.57	\$230.33	\$280.00	\$230.58	\$220.76	\$228.37
		Associate	38	\$140.00	\$150.00	\$169.97	\$157.44	\$152.21	\$152.70
Seattle, WA	Litigation	Partner	124	\$345.17	\$417.76	\$490.00	\$418.96	\$413.94	\$418.33
		Associate	94	\$239.69	\$273.72	\$333.11	\$290.34	\$294.56	\$286.21
	Non-Litigation	Partner	252	\$360.50	\$460.78	\$519.93	\$449.26	\$457.39	\$429.84
		Associate	176	\$240.19	\$284.37	\$355.00	\$301.43	\$310.64	\$298.33

Section I: High-Level Data Cuts

Cities

By Years of Experience

2016—Real Rates for Partners

Trend Analysis (Mean)

City	Years of Experience	n	First Quartile	Median	Third Quartile	2016	2015	2014
Portland, ME	Fewer Than 21 Years	13	\$205.00	\$290.00	\$360.00	\$283.46	\$279.62	\$272.87
	21 or More Years	31	\$206.82	\$376.63	\$452.62	\$372.17	\$320.96	\$296.01
Portland, OR	Fewer Than 21 Years	63	\$300.00	\$363.21	\$400.00	\$361.63	\$350.82	\$344.88
	21 or More Years	69	\$365.00	\$424.90	\$490.00	\$424.33	\$415.94	\$419.00
Providence, RI	Fewer Than 21 Years	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$240.54	n/a
	21 or More Years	15	\$250.00	\$335.00	\$605.00	\$395.58	\$331.66	\$313.60
Raleigh, NC	Fewer Than 21 Years	29	\$285.00	\$330.00	\$354.79	\$343.14	\$328.33	\$302.97
	21 or More Years	24	\$303.90	\$404.67	\$468.75	\$396.05	\$394.88	\$394.16
Richmond, VA	Fewer Than 21 Years	64	\$300.00	\$417.50	\$607.50	\$457.35	\$422.03	\$390.97
	21 or More Years	73	\$314.99	\$450.00	\$688.13	\$499.30	\$472.51	\$478.26
Rochester, NY	Fewer Than 21 Years	11	\$265.00	\$361.13	\$375.00	\$343.28	\$348.26	\$336.34
	21 or More Years	20	\$248.80	\$277.93	\$372.12	\$306.51	\$349.57	\$343.94
Sacramento, CA	Fewer Than 21 Years	14	\$345.06	\$405.23	\$553.65	\$441.18	\$471.91	\$362.76
	21 or More Years	27	\$350.00	\$430.00	\$610.00	\$490.73	\$475.32	\$418.90
Salt Lake City, UT	Fewer Than 21 Years	45	\$270.00	\$298.74	\$395.00	\$330.94	\$312.48	\$291.86
	21 or More Years	39	\$316.00	\$370.00	\$480.00	\$387.58	\$362.13	\$349.65
San Antonio, TX	Fewer Than 21 Years	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$303.98
	21 or More Years	10	\$250.00	\$325.00	\$440.00	\$364.96	\$306.71	\$368.81
San Diego, CA	Fewer Than 21 Years	69	\$325.00	\$485.00	\$695.31	\$513.57	\$522.21	\$503.79
	21 or More Years	73	\$315.00	\$395.00	\$762.53	\$520.88	\$494.69	\$493.13
San Francisco, CA	Fewer Than 21 Years	192	\$342.00	\$545.00	\$712.00	\$554.51	\$587.26	\$555.20
	21 or More Years	287	\$400.00	\$650.00	\$800.00	\$626.38	\$622.94	\$591.43
San Jose, CA	Fewer Than 21 Years	63	\$537.88	\$769.47	\$835.08	\$743.01	\$719.59	\$659.00
	21 or More Years	84	\$613.00	\$821.88	\$962.15	\$801.80	\$823.55	\$736.44
San Juan, PR	Fewer Than 21 Years	11	\$165.00	\$189.14	\$194.71	\$192.71	\$178.31	\$184.03
	21 or More Years	9	\$249.02	\$250.00	\$309.89	\$266.10	\$289.35	\$285.15
Seattle, WA	Fewer Than 21 Years	109	\$319.82	\$383.00	\$453.37	\$393.61	\$398.21	\$372.06
	21 or More Years	171	\$400.00	\$470.92	\$538.44	\$469.21	\$465.92	\$448.98
St. Louis, MO	Fewer Than 21 Years	87	\$250.00	\$328.00	\$400.00	\$325.10	\$330.54	\$336.30
	21 or More Years	118	\$288.00	\$395.15	\$475.00	\$385.62	\$392.54	\$387.10
Syracuse, NY	Fewer Than 21 Years	16	\$187.50	\$220.00	\$275.00	\$231.79	\$244.59	\$233.24
	21 or More Years	24	\$240.00	\$315.43	\$366.01	\$303.68	\$293.52	\$295.09
Tallahassee, FL	Fewer Than 21 Years	7	\$225.00	\$390.00	\$485.00	\$367.71	\$340.71	\$312.80
	21 or More Years	13	\$420.00	\$465.00	\$577.13	\$510.10	\$528.96	\$451.07
Tampa, FL	Fewer Than 21 Years	43	\$275.00	\$335.00	\$405.00	\$328.92	\$327.52	\$327.88
	21 or More Years	68	\$295.00	\$396.47	\$492.50	\$406.11	\$415.82	\$386.46

Section III: Practice Area Analysis

Commercial

By City

2016—Real Rates for Partners and Associates

Trend Analysis (Mean)

City	Role	n	First Quartile	Median	Third Quartile	2016	2015	2014
Portland, OR	Partner	32	\$325.00	\$392.00	\$467.60	\$398.48	\$379.78	\$359.94
	Associate	63	\$232.00	\$270.00	\$316.04	\$272.76	\$261.82	\$240.43
Richmond, VA	Partner	19	\$300.00	\$350.00	\$595.00	\$437.86	\$531.07	\$491.55
	Associate	21	\$295.00	\$330.00	\$395.00	\$333.08	\$379.77	\$311.42
Salt Lake City, UT	Partner	16	\$295.03	\$402.38	\$498.17	\$396.65	\$412.97	\$360.43
	Associate	7	\$170.00	\$205.00	\$280.00	\$220.68	n/a	\$204.79
San Diego, CA	Partner	10	\$340.00	\$742.84	\$819.00	\$605.85	\$559.14	\$616.42
	Associate	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$383.83	\$394.84
San Francisco, CA	Partner	60	\$472.50	\$616.69	\$740.24	\$619.73	\$600.28	\$598.63
	Associate	36	\$350.50	\$445.54	\$546.50	\$478.96	\$438.04	\$418.59
San Jose, CA	Partner	20	\$648.38	\$759.25	\$840.22	\$715.10	\$707.27	\$595.29
	Associate	7	\$160.00	\$415.00	\$437.75	\$345.39	\$437.57	\$405.14
San Juan, PR	Partner	14	\$190.00	\$205.00	\$240.00	\$218.99	\$243.22	\$235.62
	Associate	10	\$145.00	\$150.00	\$165.00	\$153.14	\$151.97	\$152.90
Seattle, WA	Partner	72	\$371.00	\$430.50	\$490.00	\$433.22	\$448.78	\$442.16
	Associate	48	\$247.47	\$282.00	\$345.84	\$303.53	\$295.71	\$313.09
St. Louis, MO	Partner	23	\$420.00	\$440.00	\$475.00	\$448.26	\$433.42	\$418.59
	Associate	7	\$232.00	\$275.00	\$300.00	\$261.71	\$272.25	\$249.12
Tampa, FL	Partner	10	\$250.00	\$372.50	\$475.00	\$375.10	\$441.56	\$374.80
	Associate	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$300.99	\$266.24
Washington, DC	Partner	346	\$587.25	\$706.50	\$845.10	\$728.84	\$695.64	\$699.77
	Associate	252	\$357.93	\$437.77	\$516.58	\$451.30	\$432.15	\$442.37

Section III: Practice Area Analysis

Labor and Employment

By Years of Experience and Matter Type

2016—Real Rates for Partners

Trend Analysis (Mean)

Years of Experience	Matter Type	<i>n</i>	First Quartile	Median	Third Quartile	2016	2015	2014
Fewer Than 21 Years	Litigation	482	\$330.03	\$420.83	\$595.00	\$478.70	\$456.98	\$391.34
	Non-Litigation	524	\$350.00	\$440.00	\$597.69	\$496.31	\$484.33	\$468.93
21 or More Years	Litigation	710	\$387.45	\$500.00	\$685.00	\$549.17	\$503.40	\$462.82
	Non-Litigation	822	\$400.00	\$523.37	\$688.00	\$567.93	\$546.36	\$539.14

2016—Real Rates for Associates

Trend Analysis (Mean)

Years of Experience	Matter Type	<i>n</i>	First Quartile	Median	Third Quartile	2016	2015	2014
Fewer Than 3 Years	Litigation	102	\$260.16	\$330.00	\$405.00	\$349.70	\$339.89	\$300.23
	Non-Litigation	82	\$265.00	\$309.40	\$360.00	\$315.81	\$311.61	\$285.20
3 to Fewer Than 7 Years	Litigation	299	\$264.00	\$335.00	\$505.00	\$396.84	\$370.04	\$333.01
	Non-Litigation	233	\$270.00	\$315.00	\$415.00	\$357.10	\$362.08	\$353.89
7 and More Years	Litigation	350	\$280.00	\$360.68	\$476.00	\$397.39	\$363.14	\$339.05
	Non-Litigation	354	\$285.00	\$350.00	\$460.00	\$398.89	\$397.39	\$390.85

Section III: Practice Area Analysis

Labor and Employment

By Firm Size and Matter Type

2016—Real Rates for Partners and Associates

Trend Analysis (Mean)

Firm Size	Matter Type	Role	n	First Quartile	Median	Third Quartile	2016	2015	2014
50 Lawyers or Fewer	Litigation	Partner	179	\$250.00	\$315.00	\$400.00	\$343.94	\$319.32	\$298.72
		Associate	148	\$187.50	\$250.00	\$322.49	\$259.52	\$232.51	\$219.69
	Non-Litigation	Partner	161	\$250.00	\$331.88	\$440.36	\$372.40	\$376.18	\$380.73
		Associate	106	\$175.00	\$230.00	\$294.50	\$239.14	\$289.16	\$293.01
51-200 Lawyers	Litigation	Partner	151	\$290.93	\$370.00	\$454.41	\$393.51	\$377.24	\$305.57
		Associate	115	\$216.00	\$265.07	\$315.00	\$274.45	\$255.44	\$221.43
	Non-Litigation	Partner	204	\$329.25	\$396.50	\$531.00	\$446.12	\$429.33	\$414.60
		Associate	148	\$216.00	\$275.00	\$349.50	\$298.88	\$285.10	\$273.45
201-500 Lawyers	Litigation	Partner	312	\$378.50	\$469.62	\$676.30	\$508.28	\$453.83	\$391.02
		Associate	263	\$275.00	\$325.00	\$450.00	\$369.18	\$302.14	\$272.65
	Non-Litigation	Partner	325	\$350.00	\$420.75	\$500.00	\$443.77	\$438.45	\$429.98
		Associate	185	\$255.00	\$285.26	\$330.00	\$309.97	\$291.77	\$287.01
501-1,000 Lawyers	Litigation	Partner	508	\$375.00	\$489.38	\$637.00	\$540.33	\$515.32	\$489.04
		Associate	523	\$265.00	\$330.00	\$475.00	\$385.60	\$365.68	\$364.12
	Non-Litigation	Partner	532	\$414.18	\$519.47	\$679.64	\$576.02	\$563.65	\$555.58
		Associate	428	\$285.00	\$345.00	\$427.11	\$377.87	\$388.72	\$381.74
More Than 1,000 Lawyers	Litigation	Partner	244	\$604.50	\$727.58	\$860.00	\$731.24	\$708.13	\$671.05
		Associate	394	\$362.00	\$450.00	\$545.00	\$453.62	\$445.90	\$418.43
	Non-Litigation	Partner	332	\$549.99	\$698.14	\$861.60	\$722.50	\$703.07	\$664.75
		Associate	357	\$315.00	\$400.00	\$495.00	\$432.40	\$474.43	\$457.11